

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



Bob Lewis

Steve Granholm, consultant for GGA's census, and GGA Conservation Director Samantha Murray (back row, far left), along with census volunteers and Sylvia McLaughlin (holding sign), at the dedication of Eastshore State Park.

GGA Celebrates New Park with Successful Bird Census

Golden Gate Audubon staff and members joined some 200 East Bay residents, local officials, and park representatives in a gala ceremony in early October to dedicate the new Eastshore State Park that stretches along the bay from Emeryville to Richmond. Sylvia McLaughlin, co-founder of Save the Bay and one of the founders of Citizens for East Shore Parks, received a standing ovation for her work to make the park a reality. She and others spoke of the decades it took to create the park and emphasized the work that still needs to be done to complete it.

Golden Gate Audubon worked continuously over the years to advocate for creation of the park. Most recently, GGA volunteers made a major contribution in support of the park by conducting a year-long census of the birdlife. The results have been published in a new brochure. The census, supported by the San Francisco Foundation and the California State Parks Foundation, developed a baseline that can be used to evaluate the impact of future park enhancements.

The study of the park's birdlife started in October 2005. With the help of three dozen enthusiastic volunteers, we conducted 24 censuses in each of the park's five areas, counting birds from Emeryville to Richmond during two different tidal conditions

BIRD CENSUS continued on page 4

Least Tern Faces New Threat

This fall, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) completed its five-year status review of 12 species in California and recommended downlisting four from endangered to threatened, including the California Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum brownii*). In light of Golden Gate Audubon's ongoing efforts to protect the tern at the proposed Alameda Wildlife Refuge, we're concerned that this change could mean weakened protections and further habitat loss for these small seabirds.

The California Least Tern was first impacted in the 19th and 20th centuries by the millinery trade, which collected feathers for women's hats. Since then, tern populations have continued to plummet, largely due to growing development and recreational pressures that came out of the construction of the Pacific Coast Highway. These disturbances have destroyed vital beach habitat and, in some cases, forced tern colonies to nest at inland mudflat and dredge fill sites, making them more susceptible to predation by Red Foxes, American Crows, raccoons, and domestic cats. In addition, the tern's fishing grounds have been severely impacted by dredging, development, and pollution.

When the Least Tern was first listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1970, just 600 breeding pairs were recorded in California. Since that time, populations have been on the rise, and today there are nearly 7,100 breeding pairs

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ROSTER

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets the last Monday of every month (except August and December) at 7:30 p.m. in the chapter office in Berkeley.

The Gull is published nine times per year by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The deadline for submissions is five weeks prior to the month of publication. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

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2006: A Very Good Year for Golden Gate Audubon

Imagine a 10-year-old's smile when she sees an endangered Clapper Rail through binoculars or a 9-year-old's cry of delight on his first trip to the Pacific Ocean. Or the *ahhh* of a beginning birder who just learned to identify a Song Sparrow or the *pssh* of a field trip leader who knows exactly where to find Townsend's Warblers. Imagine the exhilaration that tired volunteers feel after a day restoring native habitat at San Francisco's Presidio, Harding Park, or Pier 94, or the thrill of volunteers at the proposed Alameda Wildlife Refuge when breeding California Least Terns use the shelters set out for them. These are just several snapshots of Golden Gate Audubon's work in 2006 to keep mind as you read our year-end highlights.

CONSERVATION

We completed a year-long census of birds at Eastshore State Park and produced a brochure that includes a comprehensive checklist (see page 1). We worked on a successful plan to set aside nearly nine acres for Burrowing Owls on the Albany Plateau. We continued a seven-year bird census at Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park and adjacent Arrowhead Marsh. We are pursuing long-term solutions to halt thousands of illegal bird kills per year at Altamont Pass and to make wind energy safe for birds. We restored a tidal wetland at Pier 94 and created habitat for California Quail at Harding Park and the Presidio in San Francisco.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our Eco-Oakland Program reached more than 3,000 East Oakland elementary school students and their families, inviting them to explore and restore their local watershed and to join field trips to the Pacific Ocean and to Alcatraz Island. From birds and butterflies to mushroom identification, we increased our adult education classes four-fold, drawing more than 500 students. (See page 10 for our winter classes.)

FIELD TRIPS

Our 20-plus monthly field trips attracted more than 2,000 birders to discover and enjoy Bay Area birding areas, including Eastshore State Park and Alcatraz Island. We also launched plans to lead more "big trips" beyond the Bay Area (for details, see page 8).

MEMBERS

Nearly 700 new members joined Golden Gate Audubon in 2006, and our first membership survey provided productive suggestions to help us improve and grow.

VOLUNTEERS

Our network of dedicated volunteers increased by more 250 in 2006, thanks to stronger recruitment and training programs. In May 2006, we honored our volunteers with a field trip and party at the Crissy Field Center in San Francisco.

How does Golden Gate Audubon, a relatively small organization, accomplish so much? Primarily through the hard work of our bare-bones staff and hundreds of committed volunteers and through the contributions of our Supporting Members, who enable us to carry out vital programs to protect birds and preserve wildlife habitat. Please respond—as generously and as soon as you can—to the appeal letter you received in November from Executive Director Elizabeth Murdock. Your contributions will help ensure the continuing success of our programs in 2007—when we celebrate Golden Gate Audubon's 90th anniversary. Remember that you can contribute online at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

by Marjorie Blackwell, President



Omar Bernabe, Eco-Oakland high school mentor, showing young students tidal organisms at Muir Beach

Volunteers Inspire Oakland Students

Since 1999, thousands of elementary school students and their family members in East Oakland have been involved in hands-on environmental education and have enjoyed memorable outdoor experiences through Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Oakland Program. The year around, our staff and volunteers work with teachers, students, and their families in the classroom, invite them to explore and conserve wildlife habitats throughout the Oakland watershed, and accompany them on field trips to the ocean and other destinations.

Our dedicated volunteers are the lifeblood of the Eco-Oakland Program. They work with naturalists, rangers, and high school mentors to lead activities at a local salt marsh, at a beautiful hidden creek in a redwood forest, in elementary school classrooms in East Oakland, and at the beach. Many volunteers have no previous experience in environmental education. A passion for Bay Area birds and wildlife and a desire to reach out to underserved youth are all you need to become a great volunteer!

If you'd like to be part of the Eco-Oakland Program, we'd love to have you. Our staff and volunteers can provide you with all the training you'll need. You can share your enthusiasm for witnessing a flock of shorebirds dancing against the sun or for spotting an endangered Clapper Rail emerging from a marsh. Do you want an even more hands-on experience? You can get muddy with kids while discovering creatures at a local marsh or creek. You can also guide children in activities to restore and protect critical habitat at Oakland's Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park or lead a clean-up at Muir Beach. It's a great way to spend an afternoon, a few months, or a lifetime dedicated to conservation and education!

For more information about participating in the program, contact Anthony DeCicco, Eco-Oakland Program Manager, 510.635.5533 or adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org.

Monitoring Birdlife at the Presidio

In 2005, after several color-banded Western Snowy Plovers were spotted in the bay-side Wildlife Protection Area at Crissy Field, Golden Gate Audubon's San Francisco Conservation Committee began conducting regular surveys of the area's wildlife. Volunteers also recorded disturbances to foraging and roosting birds. The aim of the project is to document the sensitivity of the habitat and to develop recommendations for the National Park Service that would better protect Crissy Field's birdlife. Additional volunteers are needed to participate in the monitoring. For more information or to sign up for the survey, contact Matt Zlatunich at mbzlat@yahoo.com.

LEAST TERN

of California Least Tern. This is a remarkable success, and Golden Gate Audubon is pleased with this progress. However, with only one in four breeding pairs successfully fledging young, the current reproductive rate for the tern is considerably lower than what is called for in the FWS Downlisting Criteria, and the coming years are likely to bring a crash in tern populations. For this reason, we are wary of any change in the bird's status and protections.

Because these seabirds tend to be located on remote beaches off-limits to the public, naval bases and training centers have become refuges for the endangered terns. Today, more than one-third of California Least Tern populations breed on U.S. Navy and Marine Corps bases. A perfect example of this is the former Alameda Naval Air Station, location of the proposed Alameda Wildlife Refuge. The FWS and GGA volunteers have worked hard to restore habitat and monitor the fragile tern population on this navy-owned land. But if the species is downlisted and protections are weakened, the colony could begin to plummet again, just as it is beginning to recover.

Changes in federal classification require a formal rule-making process. If the FWS pursues downlisting the tern to threatened status, it will need to publicly propose a rule, which will be subject to a 60-day comment period. According to the FWS, such a proposed rule could be released anytime in the next several months, subject to budgetary constraints and competing priorities. Once posted, all comments will be considered and addressed by the agency before a final rule is published in the Federal Register.

by **Samantha Murray**, Conservation Director

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Join our team of Armchair Activists, who write letters to policy makers about endangered species such as the California Least Tern and other issues. Or come to one of our restoration events at the proposed Alameda Wildlife Refuge. For details, contact Michael Martin at 510.843.7295 or mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org. For more information on the potential delisting, contact Samantha Murray at 510.843.6551 or smurray@goldengateaudubon.org.

each month. Our stalwart field trip leaders also led 22 trips to various areas of the park to familiarize birders with the habitats along the shoreline. We noted where birds tended to concentrate and suggested opportunities for further conservation efforts.

The results appear in a brochure, *The Birds of Eastshore State Park*, which describes the park's habitats and birding sites and highlights conservation issues. Illustrated with a park map and color photographs, the brochure features a checklist showing the seasonal fluctuation of species within the park. The free publication is available from Golden Gate Audubon and the East Bay Regional Park District, which manages the park. The checklist and a final report on the census are on the GGA website.

We also conducted a census during the breeding season and found 33 species that were either confirmed or probable breeders within the park. Breeding birds are indicated on the checklist.

Some areas of the park are already favorite destinations for birders. The Berkeley Meadow hosts raptors, such as White-tailed Kite and Northern Harrier, and has an interesting variety of waterfowl and shorebirds in the winter. The Bay Trail from Point Isabel to Meeker Slough is a pleasant walk with shorebirds feeding on both sides of the trail, occasional Osprey and Peregrine Falcons flying overhead, and Clapper Rails calling from the salt marsh. The mudflats north of the Albany Bulb and south of Powell Street in Emeryville are the dining table for thou-

sands of shorebirds in migration and during the winter, while grebes, loons, and diving ducks inhabit the North and South Basins.

We had a few surprises, as birders often do. Red Phalaropes appeared in the park during last winter's irruption. Some unusual migrants, like Brewer's Sparrow, showed up; a welcome Barn Owl, the Berkeley City Bird, was in the meadow; and several Black Skimmers passed along the shoreline. More than 140 different species were seen in the park during the year of the census, including 25 species of shorebirds.

We noted places where roosting shorebirds congregate, in order to help the park management refine its conservation goals. These include the old piers along the Bay Bridge approaches, the shell mounds just outside the park along Central Avenue in El Cerrito, and the peninsulas and breakwaters west of the Bay Trail in Richmond.

We documented peak shorebird concentrations of 8,000 individuals during the winter, and waterfowl numbers exceeding 12,000. This information, illustrated in the accompanying chart, has already been helpful in guiding comments on possible new ferry routes.

The census took work, but we had fun doing it—and lots of help. Participants included Samantha Murray, Golden Gate Audubon Conservation Director, who coordinated all the efforts and oversaw the grants. Our consultant, Steve Granholm, helped me write the census protocols. Susan Groves coordinated the field trips. Carolyn Kolka organized the census vol-

unteers, and Charlotte Nolan managed the data. Tara Zuardo handled web postings, and Judith Dunham orchestrated production of the brochure and checklist. A dozen field trip leaders and our three dozen census volunteers rounded out the crew. We thank everyone involved, especially the census volunteers, who counted at dawn and dusk, during sun, rain, and wind, and the field trip leaders, who introduced the park to hundreds of birders.

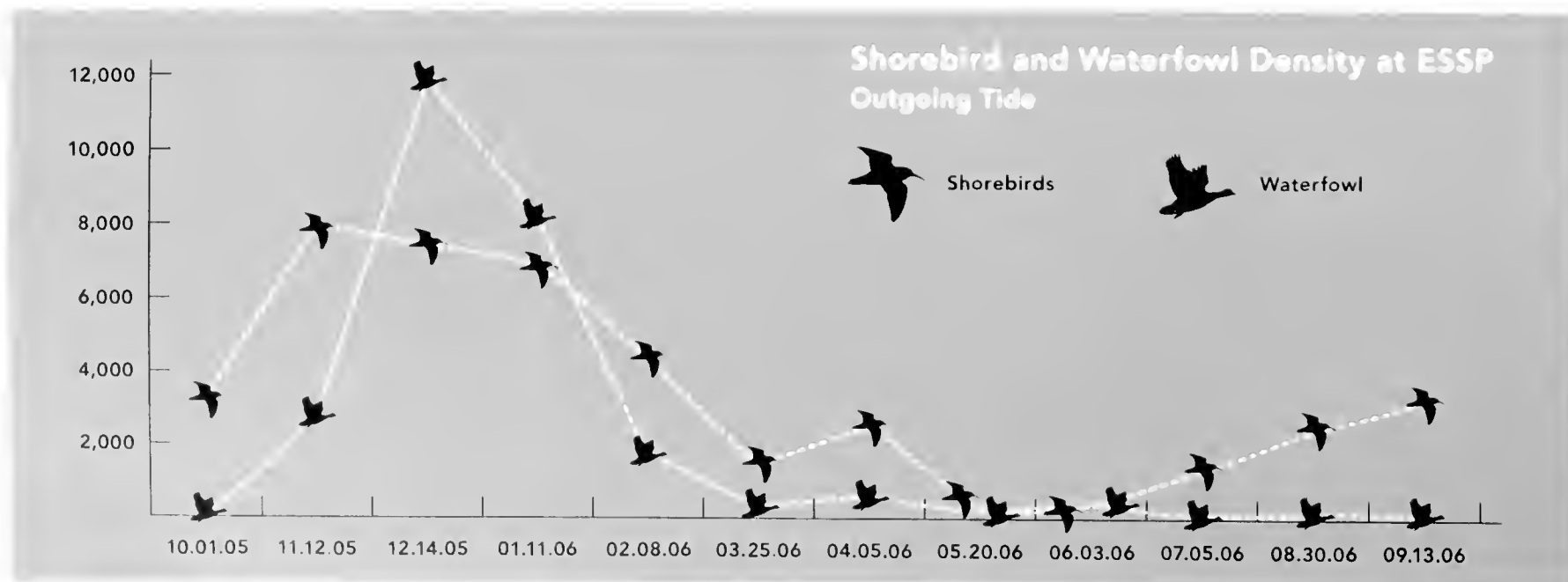
Pick up the new checklist and go out to see the park and its rich birdlife for yourself.

by Bob Lewis, Education Committee Chair

HOW YOU CAN HELP

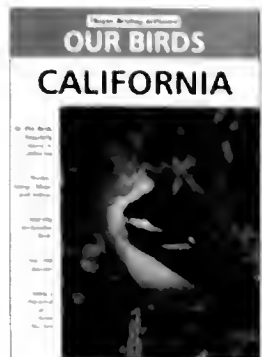
To complete the Eastshore State Park, much work, including restoration of 200 acres of uplands, still needs to be done. The park habitats and wildlife face pressures from competing recreational uses and from possible development of the Albany shoreline north of the park. To find out more and get involved, come to a meeting of the East Bay Conservation Committee at the Golden Gate Audubon office. For details on date and time, contact Samantha Murray, Conservation Director, at 510.843.6551 or smurray@goldengateaudubon.org.

The ESSP census was so successful that we are organizing a census along the Richmond Shoreline in the fall of 2007. We'll be looking for volunteers. If you'd like to participate, contact Michael Martin, Volunteer and Membership Development Coordinator, at 510.843.7295 or mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org.



Do Your Holiday Shopping at the Nature Store

The Golden Gate Audubon Nature Store has great gifts for both your human and feathered loved ones this holiday season. Our prices on bird-feeding supplies are the best in the Bay Area, and products are geared for our local species. Our selection of fine birding books will feed the most avid naturalist, and by buying from us, you'll fund our conservation efforts and help local wildlife. Don't forget that GGA Supporting Members receive a 10 percent discount.

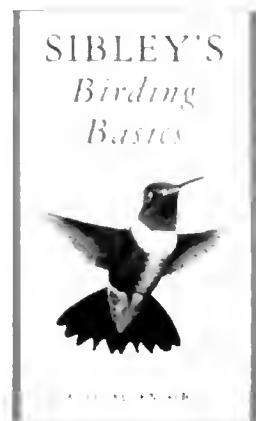


Thayer CD-ROM Software California Birds

Now you can easily identify any bird—even if you don't know its name. The new *Our Birds* CD-ROM series from Peter W. Thayer displays full-color photos of the birds regularly seen in each state. Simply enter the bird's colors, size, habitat, and/or location, and this remarkable program will instantly show you photos and names of all the birds that match your description.

Sibley's Birding Basics

This compact, easy-to-use new book by America's premier living painter of birds gets back to basics. David Allen Sibley details everything you need to know to identify birds by behavior, appearance, and vocalization. Even experts will be able to use this book to hone their identification skills. A great gift for birders of all levels of experience.

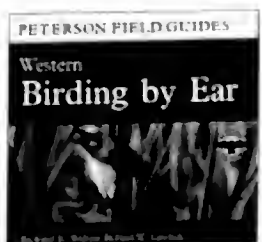


Sibley's Guide to Western Birds

David Allen Sibley, author of the *Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, has prepared this guide specifically for use in the field. Eminently portable, the book contains complete coverage of more than 650 species found in the western states, thousands of Sibley's exquisite paintings, and detailed descriptions of habitat and behavior, something most field guides lack. For your loved ones on the East Coast, be sure to check out this guide's sister volume covering eastern birds.

Peterson's Western Birding By Ear Audio CD

For more than 50 years, Peterson Field Guides have set the standard for excellence. The unique Peterson Identification System has never been surpassed as a tool for field identification. With their close-up color photographs, accurate illustrations, and detailed descriptions, this CD field guide is a must for any birder.



Gifts for the Birds in your Life

Golden Gate Audubon also carries a wide selection of birdseed mixes specially suited to our native birds. We have black oil sunflower seeds, Nyjer thistle, and sunflower chips as well as premium mixes. So don't forget to include the feathered members of your family this holiday season!



Audubon Bookmarks

These exquisite bookmarks are great accessories for any reading list. The colorful etchings of John James Audubon are revered for their accuracy and beauty. This collection of 16 miniature reproductions recaptures highlights from the great artist-naturalist's works, including images from the 1839 masterpiece, *Birds of America*: Great Blue Heron, Common Troupial, Wild Turkey, Horned Puffin, Scarlet Ibis, Carolina Parakeet, and Snowy Owl. The ideal stocking stuffer.

Audubon Plush Birds

Our National Audubon plush birds are a great learning tool for any child interested in bird sights and sounds. Each bird—Brown Pelican, Mourning Dove, Black-capped Chickadee, California Quail, and American Goldfinch—can be activated to give an authentic song or call.

Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area

Easy-to-use reference for every urban birder, this attractive guide focuses on the birds you're most likely to see in your backyard, neighborhood, and local parks. The book includes advice on building feeders and birdhouses. Color illustrations help you identify birds quickly, while the text provides interesting information about each bird.



by Yvonne Rathbone

The Golden Gate Audubon Nature Store

2530 San Pablo Avenue
Berkeley

Hours

Monday – Friday
9 a.m. – noon, 1 – 5 p.m.

Call 510.843.2222 to confirm availability and find out more about what's in stock. Or go to www.goldengateaudubon.org.



FIELD TRIPS

JOCELYN ALAU, COORDINATOR

Entrance fee

Biking trip

Detailed trip descriptions are located on our website at www.goldengateaudubon.org. If you need further information or have difficulty reaching a trip leader, please contact Jocelyn Alau at 510.703.6940 or alauahio@gmail.com.

Jewel Lake in Tilden Park

Friday, December 1, 8:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com.

Meet at Environmental Education Center parking lot at north end of Central Dr. in Tilden Park for a walk around Jewel Lake looking for winter residents. Trip ends at 10:30 a.m., or later if conditions permit. Rain cancels.

Gray Lodge and Sacramento Wildlife Refuges

Saturday and Sunday, December 9 – 10
Steve and Renee Margolin, 530.342.6476,
smg@hughes.net

We'll look for wintering geese (four species), Tundra Swans, a variety of ducks, raptors, and Sandhill Cranes. For this two-day trip, meet on Saturday at 9 a.m. in lot #14 at Gray Lodge. We'll caravan through the refuge, then visit other sites in Sutter, Butte and Glenn counties, so make sure you have plenty of gas before arriving at Gray Lodge. On Sunday, meet at 9 a.m. in visitors' parking lot at Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Bring lunch, snacks, liquids, scopes, and clothes appropriate for Sacramento Valley in December (cold, with wind and rain always possible). Heavy rain cancels trip. You may join us for both days or just one day.

Accommodations: Blue Gum Willows Motel or Best Western in Willows, or Jean's Riverside B & B in Oroville, or other motels in Oroville, Willows, or Chico. There is no lodge in Gray Lodge. **Gray Lodge:** Drive east on I-80 15 miles beyond Davis to Rt. 99 exit. Go north 52 mi. on Rt. 99 to Gridley. Turn left (west) on Sycamore, which becomes Colusa Hwy; continue 5 mi. to Pennington Rd. Turn left and follow signs to Gray Lodge. Or, take Hwy 99 to Live Oak (just south of Gridley). In Live Oak, go west on Pennington and follow it west and then north (where it may be called Almond Orchard Rd. briefly) to Gray Lodge. Proceed through checking station () and continue to lot #14. **Sacramento NWR:** From I-5, take Princeton exit just north of Glenn Co. line, and follow signs to refuge (). Allow 2.5 hours driving time from Bay Area.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturday, December 2, 10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis,
SF Nature Education; Darin Dawson,
SF Botanical Garden Docent, 415.387.9160

Meet at front gate of garden, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Cosponsored with San Francisco Nature Education and Botanical Garden.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sunday, December 3, 8 – 10:30 a.m.

Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna,
415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall,
650.349.3780

Meet at front gate of garden, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. The garden's microhabitats attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds.



Sandhill Crane.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

San Francisco Birds at Merrie Way

Sunday, December 10, 8 a.m.

Harry Fuller, 415.344.2363,
anzatowhee@yahoo.com

Meet at Merrie Way, the unpaved parking lot at west end of Pt. Lobos above Cliff House at Land's End. We'll look for resident and migrant birds, including wintering land birds, shorebirds on the rocks, and loons and other wintering waterbirds on the ocean. Email leader for transit info.

Lake Merritt

Saturday, December 23, 9 a.m.

Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at the large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. This trip is an introduction to birding as well as an opportunity to study birds that are more difficult to identify. First half focuses on waterbirds. Second half is in parklands bordering lake where we expect to see smaller birds. Vagrant species occur frequently at Lake Merritt. Route is handicapped accessible.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins. Walk into park on Perkins, or park in free lot at boathouse, 568 Bellevue. Cage is at far end of parking lot from boathouse.

Carpool to Field Trips

It's easy to carpool on GGA field trips. To join the mail list group, just go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/GGACarPool>. Once you join, you can send and receive messages about carpools to GGA field trips. Give your message a title, "Offer Ride" or "Need Ride," plus location and date of the field trip. In the body of the message, note your approximate location (El Cerrito, South Berkeley, etc.). Others who read your message will contact you to arrange a carpool. Give it a try! If you have a problem, e-mail Bob Lewis at RLewis0727@aol.com.

Bicycle Trips

Kathy and Blair Jarrett

510.547.1233, kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Leaders usually travel by public transit, which may cause delays. It is advisable to call or email for cell phone number and indicate how you are arriving. There will usually be a message on the home phone the morning of the trip. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch, liquids, and sunscreen. Dress in layers. Rain cancels all trips except for Arrowhead. Trips last until mid-afternoon.

BART schedules: www.transitinfo.org, **SF Bay Trail:** <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>
East Bay Regional Park District: www.ebparks.org

Arrowhead Marsh

Saturday, December 2

We'll ride the SF Bay Trail from East Creek Point Trailhead to Damon Marsh, Arrowhead Marsh, and Doolittle Pond Wildlife Sanctuary. Then we'll ride other trails in Alameda before returning to cars parked on Fernside and to BART for transit riders. *Rain cancels the bicycle trip but not the birding trip.* If rain is more than very light, meet at Arrowhead Marsh at 8:30 a.m. Call after 6 a.m. to get message. If it rains and leaders drive, pickup from MacArthur BART must be arranged in advance, and no bicycles can be taken. If weather is good and bike trip proceeds, meet at Fruitvale BART at 7:30 or East Creek Point Trailhead at 7:50.

Transit: Meet at Fruitvale BART at 7:30 following arrival of 7:10 train from MacArthur BART. **Car to trailhead:** Exit I-880 at High St. in Oakland and go southwest to the High St. Bridge to Alameda. Cross bridge and turn left onto Fernside and park on street. Bike back over bridge, turn right onto Tidewater Ave., and go .25 mi. to East Creek Point trailhead on right. Lesser St. is just beyond on left. **Car to Arrowhead:** Exit I-880 at Hegenberger Rd. and head west. Turn right onto Doolittle Dr. (Hwy. 61) and right again onto Swan Way. Turn left into park (look for small East Bay Regional Park District sign on left). Continue to end of lot.

Phone: 510.547.1233, 510.547.1233, 510.547.1233

Saturday, December 9

We'll make a 14-mile round trip from Alameda to the SF Bay Trail to Hayward Regional Shoreline. First portion of trip is paved; remaining part is easily negotiable.

Transit: Meet at San Leandro BART, follow Alameda Ave. to Highway 880, Richmond Blvd. 3 miles to turn right on Willow St. to end of street, turn right on Marina at end of Marina to Bay Ln. **Car:** From Alameda, turn right on Marina Blvd. exit (west) at 1.4 mi. on turn onto Highway 880, follow Highway 880 to parking lot at San Leandro. Marina Blvd. is on right, turn right.

Palo Alto Baylands

Monday, January 1

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Duck Pond at Palo Alto Baylands. We should find many species on bay, ponds, and sloughs. High tide is at 9:57 a.m., good for sighting rails. There are no hills on this trip in one of the best birding areas on San Francisco Bay. Much of the trip will be on paved trails and designated bike lanes, with part on gravel and on roads. If the weather is good, we will bicycle to Mountain View Shoreline, Stevens Creek Trail, and return to the Duck Pond, making a loop. If the weather is bad, we will drive to some of the best viewing areas.

Transit: Caltrain leaves 4th and King in San Francisco at 8 a.m. and arrives at Palo Alto California Ave. Station at 9:06. From the station, take the pedestrian turn east and continue east on California Ave. to Greer. Turn right to Oregon, then left several blocks to pedestrian bridge over Hwy. 101. Turn left to Embarcadero (1/2 block), then right/east toward bay and left on Harbor Rd. Unfortunately, there are no connections to BART this early. Call if you can offer a ride, and call we'll advance if you need one. **Car:** From Hwy. 101 in Palo Alto, take the Embarcadero East exit. Follow Embarcadero to end, turn left on Harbor Rd. and follow signs. Duck Pond parking is on left.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Wednesday, December 27,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,

hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,

510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after

9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at the large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird the area near the Nature Center, then go down the lake toward Embarcadero or up the path to the Children's Fairyland.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins. Walk into park on Perkins, or park in free lot at boathouse, 568 Bellevue. Cage is at far end of parking lot from boathouse.

Last Chance to Sign Up for the Christmas Bird Count

If you act quickly, it may not be too late to participate in one of Golden Gate Audubon's two Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). Organizers are assembling teams of birders of all levels of ability for the Oakland count on Sunday, December 17, and the San Francisco count on Thursday, December 28.

Deadline for the Oakland CBC is November 26, deadline for the San Francisco CBC is December 7. Although places cannot be guaranteed to latecomers, the fastest way to sign up is on the GGA website (www.goldengateaudubon.org). For details on the Oakland CBC, contact Dave Quady at 510.704.9353 or Bob Lewis at 510.845.5001. For the San Francisco CBC, contact Alan Hopkins at 415.664.0983.

If you go out on count day, don't miss the dinner afterward, where birders gather to enjoy a hot, delicious meal and share the day's tallies and sightings. Cost is \$12 in advance if space is reserved for the Oakland dinner by December 11 and for the San Francisco dinner by December 19. Counters can attend without reservations, at \$16 per person at the door. To sign up for the dinner, go to the GGA website or call 510.843.2222.

Traveling Far Afield with GGA

Golden Gate Audubon has started a program of excursions, called big trips, to birding destinations outside the Bay Area. Two trips, exclusively for Supporting Members and limited to eight participants, have been scheduled for 2007. The fees are less than customarily charged by professional outfitters. For more information on the two trips below, contact Ruth Tobey at 510.528.2093 or ruthtobey@earthlink.net.

Texas Coast Migration Spectacle

April 21 – 27

GGA will partner with highly respected tour company Field Guides. The 2006 bird list for this Field Guides trip totaled 203 species. Jesse Fagan, tour leader, has birded in Texas for many years. Fee is \$1,450, plus a \$150 tax-deductible contribution to GGA.

Churchill, Manitoba

June 8 – 18

Dave Quady, leader of many GGA field trips, returns to Manitoba to share with other birders the chance to see a variety of charis-



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Willow Ptarmigan.

New Quail Totebag

Alan Hopkins's elegant image of a California Quail is emblazoned on a new tote bag from Golden Gate Audubon. Measuring 17 inches tall and nearly 14 inches wide, the handsome canvas bag is generous enough to carry groceries and other purchases—or your field guides and optics. Buy a bag for yourself and give bags to your bird-loving friends at the holidays. The bags, \$10 each, are available at the Golden Gate Audubon Nature Store (see page 5).



matic breeding species from Common Eider and Willow Ptarmigan to Bohemian Waxwing and Common Redpoll. A few days of birding near Winnipeg and in Manitoba's boreal forests will round out the Churchill portion of the trip. Fee will be announced.

GGA's Latin America Committee is planning the following three trips for 2007. For details, contact Bob Risebrough at 510.549.2476 or pelecanus@igc.org.

Dominican Republic

February 11 – 18

Leader is Kate Wallace, vice-president of the Hispaniolan Ornithological Society, who will be accompanied by GGA escorts Bob Risebrough and Dana Gardner. Participants could see all 26 to 30 endemic species that occur in the DR portion of Hispaniola.

Panama Canal Zone

June 9 – 22

Leader is Guido Berguido, who led the highly successful GGA trip to Panama in 2006. GGA escort is Dana Gardner. Cost will be lower than previous GGA Panama trips but should produce just as many birds.

Natural and Cultural History of Panama

June 20 – 30

Mornings will be devoted mostly to birds; evening walks will also include amphibians and other night creatures. Afternoon seminars will explore topics in tropical and conservation biology with the expected participation of scientists of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Trip will be geared to teachers (families welcome) who wish to assemble educational material. The coordinator is Bob Risebrough.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

PAUL & JEFF, \$2000, \$400

Arlene V. Lee, Prakash Sootarsing

YOUNG & MULLER, \$1000, \$120

Claire Davis, Richard & Theresa Horrigan, Joyce M. Larrick (*Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge*), Karen D. Marcus & Gary L. Toles, John V. Sudall, Ann L. Winblad

JOHN & JILL, \$500

Bernice Biggs (*Save the Quail*), Lewis J. Feldman, John M. Hulihan, Selna Kaplan, Carrie Miller, Amy Morris, John A. Sproul (*Save the Quail*), Evelyn Zavala (*Save the Quail*)

California Coastal Commission Whale Tail Fund Grant: Eco-Oakland Environmental Education Program

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Programs: Pier 94



OBSERVATIONS

BRUCE MAST

OCTOBER 1–31, 2006

By far the most remarkable sighting this month in the Bay Area was a *Taiga Flycatcher* (*Uredula albicollis*), found Oct. 25 along Putah Cr. west of Winters in SOL and YOI (JS, ST, mob). Resembling a short-tailed, dumpy, brown gnatcatcher (its closest New World relative), this Asian vagrant would be a first N. American record if accepted. According to Surlbirds.com, Taiga Flycatcher breeds across the high north Palearctic region from the Ural Mountains to eastern Siberia and winters in Southeast Asia.

Now for the best of the rest...

LOONS TO DUCKS

The Oct. 9 pelagic trip from Bodega Bay, SON, recorded 8 Flesh-footed Shearwaters and a trilecta of Wilson's, Fork-tailed, and Ashy Storm-Petrels (DS). A terrestrial observer reported Short-tailed and Black-vented Shearwaters off the SM coast at Moss Beach on the 7th (RT). The Moss Beach Black-vented count hit 50 on the 29th (MBr). PRBO researchers at SE Farallon Islands, SE, reported a couple *Brown Boobies* (*Sula leucogaster*) roosting on the island Oct. 20–22 (DW).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

On Oct. 7, hawk watchers reported the passage of Broad-winged Hawks over Hawk Hill in the MRN Headlands, MRN, continuing through SF (BP, AH, PS). By the 28th, the Robinson Rd. area of SOL featured its usual full winter complement of Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks and Prairie Falcon, plus more than 85 Mountain Plovers (TC).

Noteworthy wader sightings included 4 Pacific Golden-Plovers, 3 Pectoral Sandpipers, and 4 Ruffs. The Franklin's Gull at Sunnyvale WPCP, SCL, remained through the 4th (DA) and a 1st winter bird was located the next day at New Chicago Marsh (KO). An immature Black-legged Kittiwake cruised the waters off Fort Funston, SF, on the 8th (MBr), and 3 south-bound Ancient Murrelets returned to the SM coast on the 31st (RT).



Taiga Flycatcher, found along Putah Creek by ornithologist John Sterling

DOVES TO THRASHERS

Hawk watchers became owl watchers when a Spotted Owl was discovered roosting on Hawk Hill on Oct. 7 (BP). Common Poor-wills were flushed at Mt. Davidson, SF, on the 2nd (PS) and at CCFS in Alviso, SCL, on the 28th (MM). Through the 9th, Black-chinned Hummingbirds foraged on Mt. Davidson (PS), in Sutro Heights Park, SF (DM, SSc, LG) and in SM (ADM). A Sapsucker in Fairmont Terrace Park, San Lorenzo (ALA) on the 16th was ID'd as a Yellow-Bellied (SSt). Its Red-naped cousin turned up in Bolinas on the 10th (KH).

At CCFS in Alviso (SCL) a silent Least Flycatcher was ID'd by size and plumage on the 8th (SR). On the 20th, a Northern Shrike was briefly observed at Battery Godfrey in the Presidio, SF (HC). PRBO banders at Pine Gulch Cr. on Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, snagged Plumbeous, Red-eyed Vireo, and Cassin's Vireos on the 3rd. The same day, a *Black-throated Green Vireo* (*Vireo soli-*

tatus) was ID'd at Chicken Ranch Beach in Inverness, MRN (BS). A Philadelphia Vireo spent 3 days in the willows at south of Merced, SF, beginning the 14th (BL, NW, LL, CL). The Sage Thrasher was seen sporadically at Hayward PS's Mt. Trashmore, ALA through the 22nd (BR, PD). Uistac Natural Area, SCL, also hosted a Sage on the 13th (PK, BR, LA).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Warbler movements tapered off after mid-month. October highlights included an immature Black-throated Green Warbler at Lobos Dunes, Presidio, on the 7th (PS, MBr), a Prothonotary Warbler at San Bruno Mountain Park, SM, Oct. 4–5 (HB), plus 3 Tennessee, Virginia's, 2 Chestnut-sided, 2 Magnolia, 1 Cape May, 4 Blackburnian, 2 Prairie, 20 Palm, 5 Blackpoll, 4 Black-and-white, and 1 Hooded Warbler; 4 American Redstarts; and 1 Northern Waterthrush.

An American Tree Sparrow drew birders to Campbell Cove in Bodega Bay, SON, Oct. 21–24 (SH, LH; mob). A Black-throated Sparrow lingered 10 days at Drake's Beach, PRNS, beginning the 11th (RS). At Meeker Slough in CC, a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was tentatively ID'd at high tide on the 18th (DQ). On the 13th, 5 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were reported from PRNS (RS). A Lapland Longspur was located Hayward RS on the 26th (BR). Other noteworthy *Emberizid* sightings included a Green-tailed Towhee, a Brewer's and 4 Vesper Sparrows, 3 Rose-breasted and 1 Blue Grosbeak, 2 Indigo Buntings, a Yellow-headed Blackbird, and a Baltimore Oriole.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "triple" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Brent Plater for assistance in compiling data.

Abbreviations for Observers: ADM: Al DeMartini; AH: Alan Hopkins; BF: Brian Fitch; BF: Bob Fowler; BFe: Bob Felling; BR: Bob Richmond; CL: Cindy Lieurance; DA: David Armstrong; DM: Dan Murphy; DQ: Dave Quady; DS: Debbie Shearwater; DW: Dave Wimpfheimer; FV: Frank Vanslager; HB: Herb Brandt; HC: Hugh Cotter; JH: Jack Hadden; JR: Jennifer Rucenga; JS: John Sterling; KH: Keith Hansen; KO: Kris Olson; LG: Linda Grant; LH: Lisa Hug; LK: Larry Kent; LL: Les Lieurance; LM: Lisa Myers; MBe: Murray Berner; MBr: Michelle Brodie; ME: Mark Eaton; MM: Michael Mammoser; MS: Michael Stevenson; NW: Nathaniel Wander; PD: Peter Dramer; RK: Pat Kenny; PS: Paul Saraceni; RS: Rich Stallcup; RT: Ron Thorn; SH: Scott Hoppy; SP: Steve Rottenborn; SSc: Susan Schermerhorn; SSt: Susan Stanton; ST: Scott Terrill; TC: Terry Colborn.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; Cr, Creek; Cyn, Canyon; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L, Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt, Mount; N, North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRBO, Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd, Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant.



BIRDING CLASSES

Winter birding classes sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon will be offered through Albany Adult School, 601 San Gabriel Avenue, Albany. This quarter, registration is online at www.albany.k12.ca.us/adult/birding.html. You can still sign up in person at the school.

Birding Basics

Denise Wright

Lectures: Tuesdays, January 9 – February 6, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Field Trips: Saturdays, January 13 – February 10, 9 – 11 a.m.

This class is modeled after David Sibley's *Birding Basics*, which is useful to own as a textbook. Focus is on beginning birders and topics useful to them: equipment, bird behavior and identification, and a bit of taxonomy. Eddie operates a nature tour company and is an accomplished trip leader and photographer. Instructor's web page: www.naturetrip.com/GGASClasses.html. Fee: \$53

Gearing Up for Spring—Birding by Ear

Denise Wright

Lectures: Wednesdays, January 10 – 31, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Field Trips: Saturdays, January 13 – February 3

Birds communicate by making a variety of sounds all year long, even in the middle of winter. This class focuses on bird sounds heard at this time of year in our area. We will learn to locate and identify birds by chirps and calls as well as songs of some species that are now starting to sing. Denise, a birdsong expert, has taught field birding courses in the Bay Area for a number of years. Instructor's web page: <http://blkittiwake.com>. Fee: \$50

Birds of the Bay Area

Rusty Salt and Bob Lewis

Lectures: Wednesdays, January 17 – February 14, 7 – 8 p.m.

Field Trips: Saturdays or Sundays (your choice), January 20 – 21 and February 10 – 11, plus a weekend trip February 17 – 18

Join an enthusiastic group of birders to enjoy the shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors, and other wintering birds of Northern California. Sharpen your identification skills and learn about bird behavior, and discover where to find birds on field trips. *Because of the popularity of this class, registrants will be selected by lottery only.* Lottery is open by online registration on the AAS website until December 17. Those randomly selected will be notified by AAS before December 24. Instructor's web page: <http://home.comcast.net/~rlewis727>. Fee: \$78

Early Spring Birding by Ear

Denise Wright

Lectures: Wednesdays, February 28 – March 21, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Field Trips: Saturdays, March 3 – 24

As spring approaches and brings increasing daylight, birds become more vocal. Males sing to stake out territories and advertise for mates. For this session, we will study the songs of resident birds as well as birds returning to the Bay Area to breed. Instructor's web page: <http://blkittiwake.com>. Fee: \$50



Lared Grebe

A Message from Our Treasurer

Golden Gate Audubon owes its financial success to the continued generosity of its members. This is clearly evident when looking at the financial statements on the facing page.

For the years ended June 30, 2006 and 2005, Golden Gate Audubon received \$148,761 and \$177,024, respectively, in gifts and donations and an additional \$69,620 and \$63,000, respectively, in membership dues. This public support not only funded member services and administration but also went to conservation and education programs. Golden Gate Audubon could not sustain its programs and activities without your membership dues, volunteer efforts, and generosity.

For the year ended June 30, 2006, Golden Gate Audubon's net assets decreased \$49,016, largely due to the board of directors' decision to pursue negotiations and litigation as a means to reduce the bird kills caused by the Altamont Pass wind turbines.

Golden Gate Audubon has accumulated \$788,523 in net assets since its inception, of which \$191,024 is restricted for future program services. We follow good budgeting practices to sustain important ongoing programs and to initiate new ones. Our accumulated net assets help us cover unanticipated costs when important ecological or conservation issues suddenly emerge.

For the year ended June 30, 2006, 64 percent of expenditures were for educational programs and conservation, and another 17 percent for member services, including publication of the *Gull*. Only 20 percent of expenditures were for management, general, and fund-raising expenses. We are a lean, volunteer-driven, membership organization.

We thank you for helping us remain a leading wildlife conservation and education organization in the Bay Area and look forward to working together to build on our accomplishments.

by Al Peters, Treasurer

Golden Gate Audubon Statement of Activities

JUNE 30, 2006 AND 2005

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Combined Total	Combined Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE					
Public Support					
Direct Contributions					
Gifts and Donations	\$ 126,921	\$ 21,840	0	\$ 148,761	\$ 177,024
Grants	0	193,746	0	193,746	194,914
Total Direct Contributions	126,921	215,586	0	442,507	371,938
Indirect Contributions					
Earth Share	3,037	0	0	3,037	1,502
Total Public Support	129,958	215,586	0	445,544	373,440
REVENUE					
Membership Dues	69,620	0	0	69,620	63,000
Investment Earnings, Net	68,234	0	0	68,234	71,902
Merchandise Sales					
(Net of Direct Expenses \$7,059 in 2006 and \$8,360 in 2005)	1,900	0	0	1,900	1,760
Lawsuit Settlement Proceeds	0	0	0	0	140,000
Other	1,968	0	0	1,968	1,087
Total Revenue	141,722	0	0	141,722	277,749
Total Public Support and Revenue	271,680	215,586	0	487,266	651,189
Net Assets Released from Restriction	234,920	234,920	0	469,840	469,840
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES					
Program Services					
Conservation	212,767	0	0	212,767	216,896
Educational Programs	127,339	0	0	127,339	112,645
Member Services	89,984	0	0	89,984	54,181
Management and General	65,291	0	0	65,291	63,187
Fundraising	40,901	0	0	40,901	19,767
Total Expenses	536,282	0	0	536,282	466,676
Change in Net Assets	29,682	19,334	0	49,016	184,513
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	627,181	155,134	55,224	837,539	651,126
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 597,499	\$ 135,807	\$ 55,224	\$ 788,529	\$ 835,639

Member Nominations to the Board of Directors

In 2007, two seats will be open for new elected directors. According to the Golden Gate Audubon bylaws, petitions for board candidate must be submitted to the GGA office at least 12 weeks prior to the election, which will take place in mid-May

2007. This means that the deadline for submitting candidate petitions is mid-February. A specific deadline date and guidelines for submitting nominating petitions will appear in the January/February *Gull*.

Give a Gift that Helps Local Wildlife

This holiday season, present your nature-loving friends and family members with a membership in Golden Gate Audubon—a gift they will enjoy the whole year. Fill out the form below and return it to our office, or order a gift membership by calling 510.843.2222. If the recipient is already a member, consider making a donation in his or her name.

- ☐ Individual
\$25
- ☐ Family
\$40
- ☐ I would like to include a donation to support GGA's conservation, education, and birding programs.

Gift Membership \$ _____
Additional Donation \$ _____
Total Enclosed \$ _____

Your contributions to Golden Gate Audubon are fully tax-deductible to the extent provided by law

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EMAIL	EMAIL

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<input type="radio"/> Please charge my credit card: <input type="radio"/> VISA <input type="radio"/> MasterCard	
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NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD	SIGNATURE
<input type="radio"/> Please do not share these names with any other organization	

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Gull is the newsletter of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The Gull*, a 10 percent discount on items purchased at our Nature Store, and the satisfaction of supporting local conservation efforts. Local members of the National Audubon Society are encouraged to join Golden Gate Audubon directly. Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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